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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/821,806

04/09/2004

Chung-Shih Tang

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06/06/2006

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EXAMINER

HOLMAN, JOHN D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3643

DATE MAILED: 06/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/821,806

Applicant(s)

TANG ET AL.

Examiner

John D. Holman

Art Unit

3643

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 3/17/2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-46 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 27,28 and 31-46 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26,29 and 30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 August 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/30/2004.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 27, 28, and 31-46 are cancelled in an amendment filed on 3/17/2006.

Claim Objections

Claim 30 is objected to because of the following informalities: the claim states "the method of claim 1" wherein claim 1 is a system.

Examiner's suggestion: "method" should be replaced with --system--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3, 6, 10-14, 24-26, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kitsu (US 4382348).

Regarding claim 1, Kitsu discloses a plant cultivation system comprising a plant support (3) comprising a buoyant portion (5, 6), and at least one terrestrial plant (22) in contact with the plant support (3) wherein the at least a portion of the plant contacts the

water (1). See figure 1B and 4. The floating plant system is capable of use in fresh and saline water, therefore use in saline water is intended use of the application.

Regarding claim 2, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the water (1) comprises pond water. See column 4, lines 25-27.

Regarding claim 3, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the water (1) is located in a pond. See column 4, lines 25-27.

Regarding claim 6, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the plant support (3) comprises a sheet material (4) in contact with a buoyant frame (5, 6). See figure 3.

Regarding claim 10, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the sheet (4) is capable of being suspended at or near a surface of a body of saline water (1) and at least one buoyant support (5, 6) member is in contact with the sheet (4). See figure 3.

Regarding claim 11, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the at least one buoyant support member (5, 6) forms a supporting structure for the platform. See figure 3 and 4.

Regarding claim 12, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the buoyant support member (5, 6) comprises synthetic resin. See figure 3 and column 3, lines 54-56.

Regarding claim 13, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the sheet (4) comprises plastic material. See figure 3 and column 3, lines 52-54.

Regarding claim 14, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein a space for growth of a terrestrial plant (22) is present in a region between two buoyant support members (5, 6). See figure 3 and 4.

Regarding claim 24, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the terrestrial plant (22) comprises plant material wherein at least a portion of the plant (22) material is contacted by the water (1), and at least one plant (22) is grown from the plant material while the platform is afloat in the water (1). See figure 1B and 4 and column 4, lines 28-37.

Regarding claim 25, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the plant material (22) is a seed. See figure 1B and column 4, lines 28-37.

Regarding claim 26, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the plant material (22) is contacted with the water (1) by direct contact. See figure 1B and 4.

Regarding claim 30, Kitsu discloses a plant system wherein the plant is a cultivated crop. See column 7, lines 10-14.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4, 5, and 15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitsu (US 4382348) in view of Raskin (US 5876484). Kitsu is discussed above.

Claim 4 differs from Kitsu's plant system in calling for the water to contain a contaminant. Raskin discloses a plant system wherein the water contains a metal ion.

See column 3, lines 66-67 and column 4, lines 1-9. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Kitsu's plants system in view of the teachings of Raskin to include a contaminant in the water for the purpose of removing the contaminant to purify the water.

Regarding claim 5, Kitsu as modified by claim 4 discloses a plant system wherein the water is contaminated by lead. See Raskin column 4, lines 1-9.

Claim 15 differs from Kitsu's plant system as modified in claim 4 in calling for an irrigation system. Raskin discloses a plant system comprising an irrigation system. See column 10, lines 55-59. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify Kitsu's plant system in view of the teachings of Raskin to include an irrigation system to supply the system with fresh water.

Regarding claim 16, Kitsu as modified by claim 15 discloses a plant system comprising an irrigation system that delivers fresh water to the plant. See Raskin column 10, lines 55-59.

Regarding claim 17, Kitsu as modified by claim 15 discloses a plant system comprising an irrigation system that delivers a nutrient to the plant. See Raskin column 10, lines 55-59.

Regarding claim 18, Kitsu as modified by claim 15 discloses a plant system comprising an irrigation system that delivers fresh water, which has a lower salinity than saline water to the plant. See Raskin column 10, lines 55-59.

Regarding claim 19, Kitsu as modified by claim 15 discloses a plant system comprising an irrigation system comprising means of storing the irrigation water. See Raskin column 10, lines 52-59.

Claims 7-9, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitsu (US 4382348) in view of Shryock (US 2003/0049392). Kitsu is discussed above.

Claim 7 differs from Kitsu's plant system in calling for a growth medium. Shryock discloses a plant system comprising a growth medium. See paragraph 17 and 33. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Kitsu's plant system in view of the teachings of Shryock to include a growth medium for the purpose of providing nutrients to the plants.

Regarding claim 8, Kitsu as modified in claim 7 discloses a plant system wherein the growth medium is at least partially contained in a housing (4, 5, 6). See figure 4.

Regarding claim 9, Kitsu as modified in claim 7 discloses a plant system wherein the buoyant portion (5, 6) is the housing. See figure 3 and 4.

Claim 20 differs from Kitsu's plant system in calling for at least one growth medium capable of being suspended at the surface of the water. Shryock discloses a plant system comprising a growth medium. See paragraph 17 and 33. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Kitsu's plant system in view of the teachings of Shryock to include a growth

medium on the sheet between the buoyant members for the purpose of providing nutrients to the plants.

Regarding claim 21, Kitsu as modified in claim 20 discloses a plant system wherein the growth medium is soil. See Shryock paragraph 17.

Regarding claim 22, Kitsu as modified in claim 20 discloses a plant system wherein the growth medium is contained in a housing comprising plastic. See column 3, lines 52-54.

Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitsu (US 4382348) as applied to claim 20 above, and further in view of Kiode (US 5261185). Kitsu and Shryock are discussed above. The claim differs from Kitsu's plant system as modified in claim 20 in calling for an evaporation protective layer at the surface. Kiode discloses a plant system comprising an evaporative protective layer (16). See figure 13 and column 9, lines 47-53. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify Kitsu's plant system in view of the teachings of Kiode to include a evaporative protective layer to protect the plants from the outside elements.

Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitsu (US 4382348). The claim differs from Kitsu's plant system in calling for a specific type of plant. It would have been an obvious choice to plant a specific type of plant depending on what is aesthetically pleasing to the user.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John D. Holman whose telephone number is 571 272-2754. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9am-6pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Poon can be reached on 571 272-6891. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JDH


PETER M. POON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

5/30/06